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House of Representatives

The House was not in session today. Its next meeting will be held on Friday, February 1, 2013, at 11 a.m.

Senate

THURSDAY, JANUARY 31, 2013

The Senate met at 9:32 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable HARRY REID, a Senator from the State of Nevada.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Almighty God, whose attributes are both majestic and manifold, strengthen our Senators, enabling them to live this day to the fullest. Give them the humility to be more concerned about being on Your side than assuming that You are on their side. May they combine confrontation and compromise as they work together to find solutions for our national problems. Lord, help them to give precedence to principle over party, as they seek to honor You with their lives. Today, fill this legislative Chamber with Your presence, so that Your will will be done on Earth even as it is done in Heaven.

We pray in Your merciful Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable HARRY REID led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. LEAHY).

The assistant legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, January 31, 2013.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable HARRY REID, a Senator from the State of Nevada, to perform the duties of the Chair.

PATRICK J. LEAHY,
President pro tempore.

Mr. REID thereupon assumed the chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. DURBIN). The Senator from Kentucky is recognized.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, the majority leader has suggested that I go ahead, and, therefore, I will.

THE ECONOMY

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, yesterday, we learned our economy contracted for the first time in more than 3 years. This news comes, of course, after President Obama spent an entire election promising Americans that a return to robust economic growth was right around the corner and little more than 1 week after the President said in his inaugural address that "economic recovery has begun."

I am not so sure the people of Kentucky would agree with that assessment, given that the unemployment rate there is still above 8 percent. But this is not the first or the second time

this White House has oversold the recovery. It is not even the third or fourth time. A lot of us remember the "summer of recovery." A lot of us also remember when the Vice President promised the stimulus would "literally drop-kick" us out of the recession.

Look, if the White House spent nearly as much time trying to actually fix the economy as it did claiming it was fixed—and then finding excuses and scapegoats when its premature pronouncements turned out to be false—I suspect the economy would actually be doing better than it is today. But the President seems not to have learned that lesson because, just yesterday, he tried to pin the latest negative economic news on congressional Republicans once again.

The President can make any excuse he wants, but it is not going to help Americans find jobs.

One thing the President could have done instead of wasting so much time blaming others would have been to convene the Jobs Council he created amidst so much fanfare. He has not done that for more than 1 year. In fact, from what I understand, the Council is expected to actually disband today after having met only four times since 2011.

We have had 4 years of the Obama economy. It has not worked. This would be the time to try something new. But the President seems content to simply double down on more of the same. He wants to spend more, which would only worsen our trillion-dollar deficits. The very same President who

● This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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